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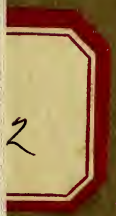
A Discussion of Their Place and Methods

With Suggested Forms



By
REV. J. W. WELLONS, D. D.
Elon College, N. C.

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WELLONS' FAMILY DEVOTIONS

A DISCUSSION OF THEIR PLACE AND METHODS

Suggested Formulas and Prayers

Price, 10c the copy, postpaid;
$1.00 the dozen, postpaid

Prepared By
REV. J. W. WELLONS, D. D.
Elon College, N. C.

For Sale By the Author)

Preface

The author's object, in this little book, is to stimulate a spirit of family prayer and Bible reading, believing as he does that children should be taught to be Christlike from infancy, and the principles of Christianity instilled in their very natures; that they should be able to defend the Bible and Christianity against all foes and critics, stand up for the right and condemn the wrong; and so make good citizens and be fitted for the arduous duties of life, and a final rest in heaven.

Fraternally,

J. W. Wellons.

Forms of Family Devotions

CONSECRATION

Before rising in the morning, use this consecration vow: "I accept this day Jesus Christ as my Savior, my Lord, and my King, and I will try to serve Him every day in everything."

MORNING SERVICES

When the family has gathered at the table let the head of the family, or some member designated by him, read a lesson from the Bible. We advise this course so as to get every member of the family in the habit of reading the Bible. Then comes the prayer, led by any member of the family designated. Let the following be used:

MORNING PRAYER—First Form

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, we come before Thee this morning with grateful hearts for Thy watchful care during the night. May

we feel this morning that our sins are all forgiven us, and that we may start out this morning with clean hearts and consciences, void of offence towards all mankind. Help us to serve Thee during the day and be at peace with all men. We pray Thy richest blessings to rest upon all of us during the day. May we be able to govern our tempers and keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and may our dealings with our fellowmen be just and true, as we would have others deal with us, so we can meet our God in the judgment with clean conscience. Bless us and all those we love, we ask all for Christ's sake. (Or anything you may want to add. Then repeat the Lord's prayer in concert.)

"Our Father who art in heaven; Hallowed by Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

MORNING PRAYER—Second Form

O Lord, our heavenly Father, we are grateful to Thee for Thy watchful care during the hours of sleep and rest; and that Thou hast brought us in peace and safety to the light and duties of another day. O, may Thy Holy Spirit lead us to entire submission to Thy will; and Thy mighty power keep us from evil and danger, and enable us to live very near Thee. May we commit ourselves entirely, depending on Thee, to be guided by Thy wisdom. Deal with us, we pray Thee, according to Thy loving kindness and tender mercies. May we look to Thee for strength to support us during the trials and temptations of this day, that we may be spiritually strong and supported by Thy grace in every duty of this day. We pray Thee to be very gracious to our loved ones and lead them by Thy council in the path of duty and safety, and reveal unto us all our duty as we owe it to God and man. Amen.

FAMILY DEVOTION FOR EVENING

Immediately after supper let the parents and children meet in a room, all with Bible or Testament in their hands. Turn to a chapter and let father read first, then mother, and then the children, each a verse, and so on, until the lesson is read. Then the father or mother or some member of the family should lead in prayer. Here are two forms of prayer:

EVENING PRAYER—First Form

O, Lord, our heavenly Father, we come before Thee with the gratitude of our hearts for Thy protecting hand and mercy through the day. Whatever we may have said or done wrong during the day, we beseech Thee to forgive us; and may we feel the light of Thy countenance reconciled resting on us. May we feel we are heaven born and heaven bound; that our faces are set heavenward, and we have satan and the world behind us.

We pray Thee to take care of us during the night, that we may sleep and rest from the toils of the day. We pray Thee to direct our minds in the way we should go, and may we not be tempted or tried above what we are

able to bear as good soldiers of the Cross of Christ, but deliver us from evil. Bless us and our loved ones and every member of the family. Direct, we pray Thee, our thoughts, that they may be for our good and God's glory, we ask for Christ's sake. (Conclude with the Lord's Prayer repeated in concert.)

"Our Father, who art in heaven: Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Or this form:

EVENING PRAYER—Second Form

"O Lord, as we retire to rest tonight, we lift our hearts to Thee in gratitude for Thy mercies through the day. May the experiences through which we have passed show us our weakness and lead us to a more constant trust in Thy grace.

Forgive us of the sins we have committed

during the day, or wherein we have omitted duties, or have failed in any way, do Thou graciously pardon. We are conscious of our personal unworthiness, and confess that all our hope is in Thee and Thy grace. Take from us all love of sinning and may our wills become more and more in harmony with Thine.

We beseech Thee, Heavenly Father, to watch over us during the night, and protect us and keep us and all who are dear to us while we sleep. May refreshing rest be ours, so that we may arise in the morning with new vigor and ready for the work of another day. And when we have finished our course in this world, may we be admitted into Thy presence, where there is no night, and sin cannot enter. Hear us in these and all our petitions, we ask in Jesus' name." (Conclude with the Lord's Prayer in concert.) Amen.

After this have one or two songs, if possible, and then let the small children retire for rest and sleep. The following hymns would be appropriate:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name, etc."

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, etc."

"All to Jesus I surrender, etc."

"Jesus Lover of My Soul, etc."

If such service is observed regularly in the home it will become a sort of second nature and the children will not want to retire without it. Keep this up and you will never have infidels, skeptics, and wayward sons in your home, for Solomon well said, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

BLESSINGS TO USE AT TABLE

O, Lord, we thank Thee for this, another expression of Thy goodness. Amen.

O, Lord, pardon our sins, sanctify a portion of this food to the nurture of our bodies and our souls to Thy service, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Indulgent Lord, bless these refreshments to our use and us to Thy service, we beg for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(It is the author's conviction that not only should the father or head of the family ask the blessing at meals, but that he should call upon members of the family in turn to perform this duty.)

Training of Children

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

Early and good impressions are essential in forming character, to fear God and keep His commandments. Mother forms the character of her children either for good or evil. She teaches them to read the Bible and to say their prayers at her knee, and then it becomes a part of their very nature. She teaches them obedience to their parents and to God. We so often think and speak of dear mother—what she taught us when we were children. What would she say now, were we to depart from what she taught us when we were children? We loved and obeyed mother when children. Why not now? She is mother just the same, and loves her children just the same. Can I ever forget how sweet she looked and how tenderly she called my name, as no one but mother could call it? And we can almost hear her sweet voice calling our names now. Can we afford to do what she would not have us do, and

trouble, and almost break, her heart? Ah! I must love and respect my dear old mother, regardless of what others may say or think. I cannot remove her sweet words from my mind.

She may have long since gone to the spirit land, but her memory and her words, how we cherish them, and they will ring so sweetly in our ears while we live. Dear mother, speak and let us hear thy sweet voice again. Children, love, cherish and obey your mother, for you will soon be without mother. Hear what the poet says:

Kiss the Dear Old Mother

"Kiss the dear old mother, her cheek is wan and wasted,
Feeble are the footsteps that once were gay;
Many a bitter cup of sorrow she has tasted,
Borne unnumbered trials since her wedding day.

"Think of all the hours that she is sad and lonely,
All her vanished pleasures living o'er again;
Cheerful and contented will she be if you will only
Kiss the dear old mother now and then.

"When by fame or fortune you are proudly knighted,
Let the dear old mother enter in your joy;
See the aged pilgrim trembling and delighted,
At the world's opinion of her boy!

"Think of all you owe her; seek to give her pleasure,
Spite of cruel sneers from cold and careless men;
While within your keeping you hold this precious treasure,
Kiss the dear old mother now and then."

GOOD CHILDREN

Everybody loves good children, and nobody loves bad children but their parents, and they don't love them as much as they should, or they would make them good children so they might make good men and good women. Good children always obey and reverence their parents, and if they don't do so, their parents are chargeable for it.

Let us rear children right. We were once little children. Jesus was once a child. See how he matured. He was once a carpenter, and next a Savior; once a sweet little child, then a young man. Jesus was well cared for and properly taught. So our children must be well cared for and properly taught. Conse-

crate them to God in infancy, as Jesus was. Never let them go to school except where they will have a religious influence exerted over them.

Jesus loves little children, and so do we. He took them in His arms and blessed them, and so should we. Jesus did so much for mankind, and so we ought to do, to make good companions, parents, teachers, preachers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, farmers, mechanics, missionaries, statesmen, and parents of great men and women. Start them right. Teach them to read the Bible and to ask and trust in God for guidance, that they may make a success in life.

PARENTS

Teach your children not to use by-words, or take the name of the Lord in vain. Teach them not to use intoxicating liquors of any kind, or to use tobacco in any form (although some parents are guilty of using it themselves); never to indulge in telling smutty jokes or vulgar conversation such as they would not be willing for their mother to hear them use. Teach them to have clean hands, clean mouths, clean hearts and clean consciences.

Mother, teach your children to read the Bible and to pray every day, and teach them their Sabbath school lesson, and they will always be anxious to attend the Sabbath school and work for its success. *Have your children read some passage of scripture every day and then tell you the contents of what they have read, and they will long remember it.*

CONSECRATION OF CHILDREN

I give a few passages of scripture on the consecration of children, that we might do well to read carefully: 1 Samuel 1:21-28; Matt. 19: 13-15; Mark 10:13-16.

The faculties and capacities of the child are largely formed before the child is born into the world. Thus the mother is largely responsible for its disposition, and features, and capacities, that make up the child's mind and appearance. Therefore, she should consecrate it to God before its birth into the world, that it may be consecrated soul and body to God.

When the child is a month old, or as soon thereafter as practicable, parents should have the minister come to their home and consecrate

the young life to God in its infancy, that its Christian virtues may grow up with it. The child's character is formed largely before it is five years old, we are taught. Then how careful the mother should be to see that its character should be properly developed. All evangelical Christians should see that their children are consecrated in infancy to God, not that it has a saving virtue in it, but is a strict act of obedience to the Lord. The parents should come before the minister with their child, when the minister should read: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray, and the disciples rebuked them." Matt. 19:13-15. "But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them." Mark 10:14-16.

The minister shall take the child in his arms and shall say, *"Name this child."*

I consecrate thee to the Lord in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (Return the child.) Let us pray. (A suitable prayer.)

The minister shall add this benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all forever. Amen."

OBEDIENCE OF CHILDREN

Children, obey your parents. One of the Ten Commandments says, "Honor thy father and thy mother," with promise. The Apostle Paul says, "Children, obey your parents, for it is right." Good children obey their parents. It makes them and their parents happy. It will make them good associates, good companions, and will cause them to succeed in life and make good members of the church, and grow to distinction in life.

Disobedient children make failures in life, and make themselves and their parents unhappy, and often come to a bad end in life; make unpleasant associates and bad companions.

Children, never speak cross to your mother,

or pout when she tells you what to do. She knows better than you do.

Parents, give each one of your children a good Bible. Children, read it every day. It is God speaking to you so sweetly. Hear him, and then you can say, "I am so glad Jesus loves me."

Children, say your prayers every day. That is talking to Jesus, and he is listening so tenderly. Tell him all about your troubles and your joys; ask him to pardon your past offences, and to lead you in the paths of duty, and then you can say, "I am so glad I love Jesus."

Concluding Word, and a Plea

I am closing this little volume now in my 89th year, and am gradually retiring from active work. But a long experience and wide observation have convinced me that there is no excuse for not having family prayer every day. Let some member of the family lead in an extemporaneous prayer or use one of the forms laid down in this little book, which will express our needs every day. Read or repeat it, closing with the Lord's prayer. As we ask a blessing at the table every meal, so we can come before God every day in solemn prayer, using the same words, if need be, as we need similar blessings every day. Coming from the heart they will be heard, and we will be blessed. In the absence of parents, even children, by using this little book, can have family worship.

I feel that the blessed Lord put it into my heart to prepare this little work and to suggest these all-important things. As the Lord suggested thoughts to my mind, I wrote them

down, unconnected as they may be. I have been long preaching to parents and grandparents of children, and am now penning these lines mainly for the benefit of the children and young people, who are the hope of our country.

I send this little volume forth, hoping it may scatter good seed that may fall in good ground and bring forth good fruit. This probably is my last writing, but I dare not say good-bye, for the Lord may have something more for me to do in this line yet. But should this be my last farewell, I hope to meet you one day in the home of the soul.

Hopefully and sincerely,

J. W. WELLONS.

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